

REMARKS

I. Introduction

Applicant acknowledges with appreciation the allowance of claims 1-10 and the clarity with which the Examiner's position is expressed in the final Office Action. Claims 11-13, 15-21, and 23 stand rejected under §102(b) in view of U.S. Pat. No. 4,300,556 to Ochi ("Ochi"). Claims 14, 22, and 24 stand rejected under §103 in view of Ochi and U.S. Pat. No. 5,607,409 to John ("John").

II. 35 U.S.C. §102(b) rejection - Ochi

Claims 11 - 13, 15 - 21, and 23

Independent claims 11 and 18 define a steam treatment device and a head for a steam treatment device. Both claims include a boiling chamber defining a steam outlet and an inflow pipe which is disposed, at least in part, *adjacent* to the steam outlet. Claims 11 and 18 have been amended to clarify that role of a boiling chamber is, in fact, to boil water to form steam. Claims 11 and 18 have also been amended to note that position of the inflow pipe results in the inflow pipe bursting bubbles exiting the steam outlet. The inflow pipe thereby protects against hot water droplets from bursting bubbles. In other words, the inflow pipe provides an effective foam brake by breaking up bubbles exiting the boiling chamber steam outlets before the hot bubbles can enter the delivery pipe. (Specification, pages 1-2, 8).

Ochi is directed to a facial beauty device. The device sprays cool water from a reservoir (3) through a nozzle (8) into a hood (10). (Ochi, Col. 3, lines 57 - 68). In addition, the device sends a mist, generated by physically oscillating water with an ultrasonic oscillator (20), through a delivery tube (17) into the hood (10). A heater (16) heats the mist before it enters the hood (10). (Ochi, Col. 4, lines 52 - 62). A person places their face against an opening (11) defined in the hood (10). The cool water spray and the already hot mist thereby contact and treat the face. (Ochi, Col. 3, lines 36 - 47). The resulting condensation collects in a receiving dish (12, 217) which must be

manually removed to throw away the used water, after the hood is first removed (Ochi, Col. 4, lines 9 - 12; Col. 15, lines 41-45).

Ochi does not teach or suggest the claimed subject matter. The hood (10) is not a boiling chamber - it does not boil water to produce steam. Ochi also does not include an inflow pipe which runs adjacent to a steam outlet of a boiling chamber. Although the Office Action points to the both the suction pipe (7) and the nozzle (8) as inflow pipes, Applicant notes that neither pipe runs adjacent to a steam opening. Instead, the suction pipe (7) is internal to the device, and the nozzle (8) is distant from the steam delivery tube (17). Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that neither the suction pipe (7) nor the nozzle (8) runs adjacent to a steam outlet, let alone is disposed to burst bubbles in steam exiting from steam outlets. To the contrary, Ochi adds a separate shielding plate (21) to block large water drops. (Ochi, Col. 1, lines 53 - 57; Col. 4, lines 61 - 66).

Applicant respectfully submits that Ochi also fails to teach or suggest the subject matter of many of the dependent claims. As one example, claim 12 recites an outflow pipe from the collection chamber back to the reservoir. In Ochi, the receiving dish (12) must be manually removed and emptied - there is no outflow pipe. As a second example, claim 23 notes that the boiling chamber includes a projection above the steam outlet. The projection protects the steam outlet against dripping condensate. (Specification, page 8). There is no such projection in Ochi. Furthermore, claim 21 notes that the inflow pipe curves at least partially around the boiling chamber. Neither the suction pipe (7) nor the nozzle (8) in Ochi curve partially around a boiling chamber, let alone curve partially around a boiling chamber adjacent to a steam outlet.

Applicant therefore respectfully submits that Ochi does not anticipate the claimed inventions and respectfully requests withdrawal of the §102 rejections.

III. 35 U.S.C. §103(a) rejection - Ochi and John

Claims 14, 22, and 24

The office action relies on John to show a herb pot and a lid. Nevertheless, the Ochi-John combination, even assuming motivation to combine the two references, does


not disclose the claimed subject matter. As noted above, Ochi fails to teach or suggest the features present in the independent claims 11 and 18. Although John shows a steam treatment device with a reservoir (11), heating electrodes (38, 39), and a permeable container (24), an Ochi-John combination still would not teach or suggest the claimed subject matter, including an inflow pipe disposed adjacent to a steam outlet such that the inflow pipe breaks bubbles exiting the steam outlet.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the §103 rejection of claims 14, 22, and 24.

IV. Conclusion

The cited references do not teach or suggest the claimed subject matter either alone or in combination. The Applicant therefore respectfully submits that the pending Claims are allowable. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney for the Applicant by telephone if the Examiner has any questions, comments, or concerns, or if a telephone conference would expedite examination of this application.

Respectfully submitted,



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